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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000634

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PHUM PGOV PREL KDEM ASEC GV

SUBJECT: WOMEN RECOUNT HORRIFIC EXPERIENCES OF RAPE AND VIOLENCE

Classified By: A/DCM SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Seven female victims of the September 28 massacre recounted horrific stories of the rape and violence they suffered at the hands of the military and what they claimed were militia units. One woman could not walk unassisted while the others all showed physical evidence of abuse. Some brought bloody and torn clothing as evidence. Some of the women appeared to still be in shock while all of them were clearly incensed and confused by the violence. Embassy is researching possible avenues of assistance for these victims. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On October 8, A/DCM met privately with seven women who had agreed to recount their experiences at the stadium on September 28. Six of these women had been raped by the military while the seventh had been beaten. All of them came from relatively affluent families, were well educated and well connected. The six rape victims were all middle-aged, probably in their forties or fifties.

¶3. (C) The first woman was a prominent figure within Les Forces Vives and a regular Embassy contact. A/DCM had just met with her ten days earlier and noted a shocking physical transformation. Normally well coiffed and well dressed, the woman's hair was in disarray due to injuries sustained to her scalp. She could not walk or rise from her chair without assistance.

¶4. (C) Speaking about her experience at the stadium, she described how a soldier initially struck her under her eye, causing her to lose her vision. The bruise was still evident. She had been knocked to the ground and physically violated. It was unclear as to whether she had been raped or sexually assaulted with a weapon. She said Diakite Toumbah (commander of the Red Berets) himself was the one who attacked her, which she only realized later when one of the soldiers called out his name, telling him "leave her, she is dead, she is dead," apparently in reaction to seeing all the blood. As evidence, she pulled out the shirt she had been wearing at the stadium, which was torn, dirty, and covered in blood.

¶5. (C) Toumbah apparently turned his attention elsewhere at some point and she was able to escape. She ran into a small side room, along with other women and youths, in an attempt to hide from the military. When they saw the military coming for them, they locked the door, leaving dozens of youths beating on the door as they tried to get in. "We heard them shoot...they killed all of them...all of the youths," she said. When they later opened the door, she said she had to walk over the corpses in order to leave the stadium. Several of the women said that the military had also decapitated tens of youths. "You could not even match the heads to the bodies," one said.

¶ 6. (C) The other women described similarly horrific experiences. One woman showed where she had been shot in the forehead, a bullet entering just under the skin and lodging between the skin and her skull. She said that local doctors have been unable to remove the bullet, which was still visible. Other victims described violent beatings followed by rape. In some cases, soldiers had inserted their hands or weapons into victims' vaginas. In others, soldiers shot the victims at point blank range after raping them. Two of the women lifted their skirts to show where they had been bruised and beaten. On one, finger scratch marks were evident down her back. Others pulled out torn, bloody clothing as evidence.

¶ 7. (C) When asked about the extent of the violence, the women stated that the soldiers attacked "everyone." They said there many women present at the stadium and the soldiers specifically targeted them for sexual abuse. "There were many young girls there...they attacked all of them...they were after all of us," one said. Another explained that the sexual violence was widespread, but that culture and fear have kept many victims from coming forward. The women added that many of the female victims died at the stadium. "Sometimes when they inserted the firearm, they fired it and the woman died," one commented.

¶ 8. (C) Even those women who were willing to come forward for medical treatment apparently quickly changed their minds when they discovered that the military had descended on the hospitals after the massacre. "They were waiting for us...we could not get to the hospitals...it was not safe for any of us," one said. Another claimed that anyone who comes forward

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to talk about the rapes risks being killed by the military.

¶ 9. (C) A question about the death toll sparked a heated response. They agreed that there were far more than the 157 deaths reported in the press to date. One claimed that there were at least 400 bodies in the stadium when she fled. They said that the military confiscated all telephones and cameras as people were fleeing the stadium in order to cover up the extent of the carnage.

COMMENT

¶ 10. (C) Several of the women appeared to still be in shock over what had happened to them and what they had seen. At the same time, there was an incredible sense of anger in the room. These women were enraged. They repeatedly said that Dadis, the president of the CNDD, was responsible for what happened to them, and they will accept nothing less than the complete dissolution of the junta. There was also a general sense that the violence was pre-meditated and deliberately targeted women. "They came to beat us down," one said. The women also claimed that the violence was not perpetrated exclusively by the military, but also by armed civilian militias.

¶ 11. (SBU) Embassy is researching possible avenues of assistance for these women, especially for much needed medical treatment. END COMMENT.

BROKENSHIRE